The Melville Society

NEWSLETTER

JUNE, 1949

Volume IV Number 2

Comments received from our members regarding the new format of our Newsletter have been most gratifying. Like all products of human effort, of course, the March issue was far from perfect; and sharp-eyed members immediately noted a glaring error on its cover. What should have been Volume V, Number 1, was called Volume IV, Number 1. Since all covers for the year 1949 have already been printed (to save cost), the error is repeated in the present issue and will be found in the remaining issues throughout the year. All numbers published in 1949, however, should be regarded as constituting the fifth volume of the Newsletter.

It may be noted that the present Newsletter, when unfolded, is exactly the size of the mimeograph sheet which preceded it (8½ by 11 inches). These measurements were chosen to make easier the filing of new copies with the old.

NEXT ANNUAL MEETING

Through the kind cooperation of Columbia University, arrangements for the annual meeting of the Society on Friday afternoon, September 9, from two to four o'clock, have now been completed. The meeting will be held in Room 302, Philosophy Hall, on the Columbia campus. Details of the program have not yet been announced.

The English Institute is conducting its regular session in New York City, on the invitation of Columbia University, from September 6 to 10. Its conferences will be held in Room 307, Philosophy Hall. Members of the Melville Society who wish to attend the Institute should write to Professor Alan S. Downer, Princeton University. A registration fee of five dollars is levied in advance on all members of the Institute.

Regardless of their intentions with respect to the conferences of the English Institute, members of the Melville Society are invited to tea with the Institute following the annual meeting.

Our members have indicated that New York City is a more convenient place for our annual meeting than Stanford University, where the Modern Language Association holds its convention this year. It would be desirable for all members who expect to be present at our meeting to notify the secretary by postal card as soon as convenient.

NEW MEMBER

Hugh W. Hetherington, author of the first dissertation on Melville in 1933, has recently joined the Society. He is an associate professor of English at the University of Wyoming. He read a paper entitled "Symbolism in **Moby-Dick**" at the November 1948 meeting of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association.

EXPANDING CHECK-LIST

According to present plans, the final portion of the check-list of Melville's books which has been compiled by Merton Sealts will appear in the **Harvard Library Bulletin** in the Winter 1950 issue. This means that paid-up members of the Society should receive complete copies of the check-list about February.

FOR BOOK BUYERS

V. H. Paltsits reports the sale in April at the Parke-Bernet Galleries in New York City of a fine first edition of **Moby Dick**, bound in grayish cloth with orange end-papers, for $675. The copy was from the Frank Capra library.

MELVILLE LETTER

The following is quoted from a letter to the secretary from V. H. Paltsits:

"In our **Newsletter** of June 30, 1948, on p. 2, you mentioned my inquiry about two A.L.S. that were sold at the Great Western Sanitary Fair in Cincinnati in March, 1864, one of them being item 353, an A.L.S. 1 p. quarto, Dec. 15, 1863, to Committee, with envelope, given by himself. Now, at the exhibition in Princeton [National Society of Autograph Collectors], I had pointed out to me by Capt. Pleadwell [of Honolulu] another letter dated

'New York, Dec. 10th 1863,' written to Miss Sophie Van Matré, a solicitor of autograph letters for that Sanitary Fair, in which Melville said he regretted his not having one to send her, and remarked he had the habit of tearing up his letters, instead of saving them. It seems to me that the letter he wrote and donated to the Fair, dated Dec. 15, 1863, to the Committee, and which was sold in the auction, was what he sent as a gift requested by Miss Van Matre, and that she kept the one addressed to her, which has now at last been procured by Captain Pleadwell."

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Recently published: Nathalia Wright, **Melville's Use of the Bible** (Duke University Press, 1949), $3.50.

Newly published: **The Complete Stories of Herman Melville,** edited with introduction and notes by Jay Leyda (Random House, 1949), $4.00.

Just issued: **The Spell of the Pacific: An Anthology of Its Literature,** edited by Carl Stroven and A. Grove Day, with introduction by James A. Michener (Macmillan, 1949), $6.50.

Now available: **Moby Dick** (somewhat expurgated), edited with introduction by W. Somerset Maugham (Winston, 1949), $3.50.

Juvenile: **Moby Dick,** adapted by Verne B. Brown (Scott, Foresman, 1948).

A radio version of **Moby-Dick** was scheduled for presentation over Station WOR (New York City) and other Mutual network stations on the "Family Theatre" program, Wednesday evening, July 13, from 9:30 to 10:00 o'clock.

In spite of the necessity of eliminating certain scenes and incidents which make the book particularly attractive to young romantic adults, Melville's **Typee** has frequently been reprinted in abridged editions for children. Modern editors, in fact, seem to be cutting less and less of the story. The edition recently published by the David McKay Company of Philadelphia in its Newbery Classics, for example, is well-nigh complete. The secretary is under the impression that the earliest children's version of **Typee** is that which appeared in **Robert Merry's Museum,** edited by S. G. Goodrich, XIV, 109-114, 135-139, 173-178 (October, November, and December, 1847). Does any member have information about children's editions of **Typee** or any other Melville titles before 1900?

The motion picture, **Omoo, Omoo (The Shark God),** produced by the Screen Guild and recently shown in New York City and elsewhere, has no connection with Melville, according to word received from John H. Birss.

Houghton Mifflin has announced that Howard P. Vincent's **The Trying-Out of Moby Dick** will be published in August.

The Stonington (Conn.) Publishing Company has announced the publication in August of a pamphlet, **Melville and the Whale,** by Tyrus Hillway.

A fanciful conversation on literary immortality, written by "Thersites," with Melville, James, and Kafka meeting in the after-life, appears in the **N. Y. Times Book Review** for May 22, 1949 (pp. 7, 27).

Though not strictly a Melville item, Victor Wolfgang Von Hagen's **Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands** (University of Oklahoma Press, 1949, $3.75) contains references to Melville. Von Hagen is the editor of an edition of **The Encantadas** (1940).

Edward Fiess has tentatively selected the following subject for his Yale dissertation: The influence of English Romanticism on the work of Herman Melville and on his conception of literature. A final decision on the subject and title is to be made in the fall.

In a recent article (**Hoja Volante,** February 1949), Lawrence Clark Powell draws attention to a Melville enthusiast in France, Professor Jean Matruchot. Unfortunately, the essay which Matruchot wrote on Melville was destroyed with his other papers.

THE *Melville Society* NEWSLETTER
IS PUBLISHED THREE OR FOUR TIMES EACH YEAR
for the members of the Melville Society, a group of scholars and other persons interested in the life and works of Herman Melville. The Society seeks to facilitate the exchange of information among its members, to stimulate the study of Melville's life and works, and to contribute toward the improvement of the facilities for literary, historical, and bibliographical research. Membership (including subscription to the Newsletter) may be secured through payment of one dollar annually to the Secretary, Tyrus Hillway, 423 Pequot Avenue, New London, Connecticut.